

Reality: *Flattery is like perfume: It should be smelled, not swallowed.*—Anonymous

Resting in front of the TV is not for this HED employee

Tennis player's invention a hit

Story by Alexander Kufel



Rodney Leong, PP-P, displays his "Power Strokes" invention attached to a tennis racket, ready for use. Photo by Jim Dung

Stereotypes of government workers being what they are, engineer and HED project manager Rodney Leong seems determined to prove that spending day after day doing a good job solving problems at work is not enough—he also has to apply the same techniques to his home life, in his off-duty hours.

For about eight of the 25 years he's been playing tennis, Leong has been plagued with "tennis elbow," a condition that weakens the arm and causes quite a bit of pain. Recently, he parlayed that chronic injury into a small but healthy business making and selling a weight that attaches to a

tennis racquet and strengthens a player's arm under the same conditions which cause the injury in the first place.

"I tried following the advice of various doctors who recommended strengthening, stretching and warming up before playing," said Leong. "Dumbbells strengthened my arms, but they didn't deal with the swing of the racquet and I didn't want to lug them around in my tennis bag."

Leong devised a simple solution of light, detachable weights that fit onto the strings of a

tennis racquet at approximately the same point where the racquet contacts the ball. Leverage effectively increases the weight and provides progressively greater muscle-building resistance as the player swings the racquet back and forth. He calls his device "Power Strokes." Leong said he makes three different weights to accommodate tennis players of any size or level.

He said that when he first tried it out, he was pleasantly surprised to discover that the weights not only helped cure his tennis elbow, but helped raise his game to the next level. Then, he said, others tried it, including tennis instructors, doctors and physical therapists, and they all found it to be a valuable aid to muscle strengthening. Now, he and his family are involved outside of working hours in a cottage industry hand-making the weights and filling orders. He said that he searched diligently for materials that provide a good balance between economy, functionality, durability and aesthetics. Now he's satisfied. "I've even applied for a patent," said Leong. "It's very exciting."

Sales have been principally through local tennis shops and word-of-mouth. Participation in a short-lived "tennis mall" Internet website produced queries from the mainland U.S., Canada and Australia. Recently, "Power Strokes" was featured in a Sunday "USA Weekend" new products article.

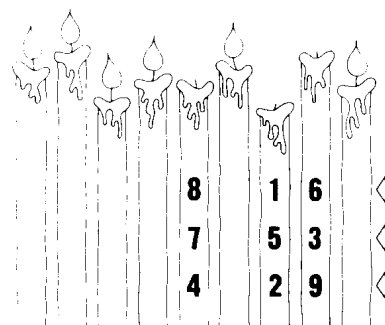
Civilian employee briefly brings military career to work



Instead of bringing work home with him, transportation assistant Rudolfo "Rudy" Atoigue, LO, turned the tables for a short period and had his career as an Army Reservist touch upon his full-time job. In ceremonies conducted by HED Deputy Commander Maj. David Austin in December, Specialist Atoigue re-enlisted for six more years.

"I enjoy both positions," he said. "It was great to have the Major do the honor of swearing me in."

Atoigue works as a finance clerk when on reserve duty and is expecting promotion to Staff Sergeant in the near future.



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Solution to Holiday Heat puzzle on page 4.